

# King County Board of Health Retreat – July 25, 2006

## Staff Notes

### Board of Health Feedback Regarding the PHOMP Policy Framework (Morning Session)

At the Board of Health retreat on July 25<sup>th</sup>, the morning session was dedicated to the Public Health Operational Master Plan. Milne & Associates, consultants on the PHOMP, guided a discussion with the Board on the background components of a Public Health policy framework

The purpose was three fold. To provide the Board of Health with

- an understanding of the components of a policy framework
- an understanding of how the PHOMP policy framework will be used in making decisions
- input into what should be addressed in a public health policy

To that end, the Board of Health discussed a mission, guiding principles, and criteria for prioritizing investments for public health in King County, and the responsibilities of the PHSKC.

#### #1 Mission:

The Board commented that this is an opportunity to create and define a future that is different from what we do today. Boardmembers commented on the need to establish a statement regarding the value of health and that will help to engage the cities and broader community around public health, which will ultimately lead to more support for public health.

The Board acknowledged the risks of establishing a broad public health mission for the County that may influence policies in the Comp Plan, decisions regarding delivery of other County services, and regional discussions through, for example, the Puget Sound Regional Council. The Board continued to be supportive of a County public health mission even given consideration of these risks. Boardmembers commented that more attention to the health in regional discussions and in the impacts of other policy decisions would be beneficial.

The Board proposed revising the mission from the current draft of “King County creates conditions under which all people and communities can achieve optimum health.” to something such as of “*promotes*”, “*supports*”, or “*identifies*” in order to reflect the fact that the County doesn’t have the ability to directly create all conditions of effecting health.

#### #2 Guiding Principles:

The Board supports using the policy framework to educate the public and push a broad vision of health. Boardmembers commented on the need to define the following:

- Social determinants of health
- The characteristics of a “healthy community”
- The characteristics of a public health “system”: quality, access, and cost

Boardmembers commented on the desire to see the following values/goals reflected in the guiding principles:

- Three A’s, a Q, and a C

- Accessibility
- Acceptability
- Availability
- Quality
- Cost
- Innovation
- System effectiveness

### **#3 Criteria for Prioritizing Public Health Investments:**

The Board was concerned that the criteria as currently worded might prevent meaningful change and innovation. Boardmembers would like to see the criteria revised so that there is less focus on screening options out and more focus on generating new options and ideas. By way of example, they suggested that the criteria “The public health system has the necessary infrastructure to support the action” should be appended with a phrase like “or the appropriate infrastructure can be built”. Likewise the criteria “Adequate resources are available to support the proposed activities” should be appended with a phrase like “or new resources can be identified”.

### **#4 Responsibilities of PHSKC:**

Boardmembers commented on:

- The responsibility of the department to convene, push, and partner to create more health focus widely
- The lack of a County policy regarding healthcare services for the uninsured. In the void of any policy direction, the department has provided such services directly. Given the changing environment, we should evaluate what the role of the department should be and establish appropriate policies.

### **Using the framework:**

- #1 The Board expressed support for establishing a broad public health mission for the King County governmental entity as a whole.
- #2 The Board was unclear on why both “guiding principles” and “investment criteria” are needed.
- #3 The Board commented that the guiding principles should determine how funds should be invested.
- #4 The Board commented that if we are establishing the mission and guiding principles for the County as a whole, then the fourth bubble on the diagram should also apply to the County generally and not just to PHSKC’s responsibilities.

## Meeting Summary (Afternoon Session)

### Background

The afternoon session followed a morning discussion regarding the draft Public Health Operations Master Plan (PHOMP). While the morning's work focused on the content of the PHOMP, the afternoon agenda tackled the role and structure of the Board of Health (BOH)

Several important policy directions from the morning discussion served as the foundation for the BOH's afternoon work, including agreement on three key issues:

- King County's role in public health is broader than the work of Public Health – Seattle & King County (the health department)
- The policy framework for the PHOMP should address the County's broad public health role (including, but not limited to those roles specific to the health department)
- The BOH should play a broad role in promoting the conditions that will result in better health for the public; the Board's efforts should focus on both health department-related activities and those that involve other components of King County.

In short, the BOH was in agreement that PHOMP and the BOH itself should focus on the *forest* and not the *trees*. This understanding enabled the BOH to use the afternoon session to develop a clearer understanding of its roles and structure.

### Roles and Strategy Ideas Related to King County as a Whole

#### Role: Provide leadership regarding public health issues

##### *Strategy Ideas:*

- Look broadly at and weigh in on public health issues in transportation, public safety, mental health, quality control in health care, etc.; decide which issues are most important to address
- Establish priority health policies and advocate through a statewide BOH coalition, international boards of health, and other collaboratives
- Create policies with broad support among multiple jurisdictions

#### Role: Build a broad-based constituency for public health

##### *Strategy Ideas:*

- Establish mechanisms to share BOH priorities and elicit issues from the public
- Convene/involve/educate the public on health issues
- Conduct community forums (take the BOH on the road) to address key issues

**Role: Serve as experts on public health issues**

*Strategy Ideas:*

- Keep focus on evidence-based practice in public health

**Roles and Strategy Ideas Related to the Health Department**

**Role: Advocate for financial sustainability of the department**

*Strategy Ideas:*

- Set fees (a statutory authority)
- Advocate for the health department in legislative budget processes – King County, State of Washington (participate in King County Council Legislative Steering Committee; map the advocacy cycle to ensure readiness)
- Monitor costs, e.g., services for the mentally ill in the Jail Health Program
- Provide input to the King County budget process at key points, e.g., February and October
- Review the departmental budget for alignment of priorities and allocation of resources and make recommendations regarding such.

**Role: Establish and monitor the policy direction for the department**

*Strategy Ideas:*

- Participate in health department strategic planning
- Host health summit(s) with elected officials from King County, suburban cities, private funders, etc. to establish common priorities and strategies
- Conduct performance reviews of departmental goals and results
- Carry out quality control activities
- Make difficult decisions, e.g., needle exchange

**BOH Structure, Membership, Operations**

**Structure**

- Keep the BOH structure as it currently is with some improvements in membership and operations (see below)
- Maximize independence and authority granted to BOH under state statute, e.g., the BOH supersedes the King County Council on health policy issues
- Organize committees to develop recommendations for the BOH as a whole to consider, e.g., related to potential new policy directions (for both King County as a whole and for the health department), legislative advocacy, etc.

## **Membership**

- The Suburban Cities would like to see a change in the number of suburban city representatives (from two to three) and in the appointment process (from appointment by the King County Executive to appointment by the Suburban Cities Association)
- Consider including representatives of the City of Seattle and King County executive branches (in addition to current legislative branch members) for broader policy direction

## **Operations**

- Appoint BOH member(s) to the state BOH coalition (if the group comes together) and to the national boards of health coalition
- Expand staff-to-staff linkages from all constituencies on the Board.
- Develop mechanisms for making recommendations on public health and BOH services and budgets to the King County Council

## **Next Steps**

Upcoming meeting agendas will include time to discuss how the group will implement its ideas regarding BOH roles, strategies, and structure. The staff will incorporate this work into the BOH's 2007 work plan.

KING COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

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JULIA PATTERSON, CHAIR

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